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Alleged Impostor Tried To Start Rescue Company

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DOTHAN — A 34-year-old man charged with impersonating a military officer at Fort Rucker tried to organize an air rescue company in Montana in 1983, but left the area after being prosecuted on bad check charges, a county official said Wednesday.

Alan Everett Goetsch Jr., of Red Bluff, Calif., was arrested by FBI officials April 10 at Fort Rucker after officials there began to suspect Goetsch was impersonating an Army captain.

Tom Biglen, county attorney in Sweet Grass County, Mont., said from his office Wednesday that he prosecuted Goetsch in 1983 on several bad check charges. He said Goetsch made restitution of approximately \$13,000 in those cases and apparently left Big Timber, Mont., in October 1984 after receiving a five-year suspended sentence.

Goetsch made a \$35,000 down payment on a \$1 million ranch while in Big Timber during a six-month period in 1983, according to Biglen.

"Nobody quite knows what he was doing. He had made himself a corporation, Para-Rescue, some type of air rescue operation," Biglen said.

Biglen said officials in Montana were never sure whether Goetsch's operation was to be for military purposes or for high-mountain rescues. "He never really said."

According to Biglen, Goetsch became very involved in community and church affairs during his stay in the town of 1,600.

"He spoke to women's clubs, and other civic organizations like the Lion's Club, telling them what he was going to do here."

Biglen said the people of the "depressed, agricultural community" were excited about Goetsch's claims that he was going to bring doctors and jobs to the area.

But Biglen added, "He kept an aura of mystery about himself."

Biglen said Goetsch moved onto the ranch before he entered a contract to buy the property, and that he apparently forfeited the \$35,000 he originally paid as "earnest money," on the ranch when he ran out of funding.

"Nobody here knew where the money was coming from," Biglen said.

Goetsch, who is being held in Houston County Jail without bond, declined a telephone interview from the jail late Wednesday.

Goetsch has contended that he was involved in a secret mission while at Fort Rucker and that he has participated in the establishment of a medical project in Nicaragua.

Fort Rucker officials have confirmed that Goetsch participated in at least two parachute jumps from military aircraft at Fort Rucker and Fort Benning, Ga.

Goetsch's attorney, Jerry Herring, said last week that his client was involved with Refugee Relief International, Inc., a Colorado-based organization that provides medical assistance in Central America.

Herring declined to comment on the case Wednesday.

Thomas D. Reisinger, president of the organization, confirmed Wednesday that he knows Goetsch.

Reisinger said that Goetsch sent him a prepaid airline ticket to visit him in Dothan in February.

"He wanted to talk with me concerning a medical project in Central America," Reisinger said from his Colorado office. "He claimed he had backers who would support such a project financially, but nothing ever panned out."

"We never worked together, but he said he was going to go in conjunction with us to send qualified medical personnel to Central America," Reisinger said. "He was contending that if it was a viable project, his alleged funding would come through."

Reisinger said he was not sure how much the proposed project would have cost, but that "you don't do something like that for \$20,000." Reisinger claimed he was never made aware of Goetsch's funding sources, adding "he was always sort of mysterious about that."

The president of the tax-exempt, non-profit organization said Goetsch mentioned Guatemala as a likely country for his project.

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